

Ms. Whelan is with the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, Toronto, Ont.

Internet resources on stroke for physicians

Kathleen Whelan, BScN, MBA

The Internet has grown rapidly over the past few years and now offers various resources on stroke to physicians and health care professionals. However, many practitioners are not aware of how the Internet can be used to enhance their practice, or of how to gain access to this timely, informative tool.

Surfing the Internet for medical information and patient resources has many advantages. It provides rapid access to abundant, current information that may be more diverse than that available from a physician's personal library or contact with colleagues. Also, a variety of sites offer clinical practice guidelines that may or may not be available in a textbook, "online" continuing medical education programs, "chat" groups or "bulletin boards" where colleagues can post clinical problems and cases, and resources to help your patients understand their illnesses. You can also "stay ahead" of your patients, who may arrive in your office with information they have retrieved from the Internet.

There are a number of North American web sites specifically about or related to stroke that are available to physicians (some restrict access to physicians only, some to health care professionals). Several are listed below.

As the Internet continues to become more functional (and thus more appealing to users), a larger number of web sites will be developed for physicians. Many will be highly interactive and may eventually be accredited by the various professional colleges. We are certainly on the edge of a revolution in information technology and physicians can take advantage of an already formidable number of resources.

Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario: www.hsfpe.org

This Canadian site is new and has been developed for physicians and other health care professionals. A wide variety of information is available, including current clinical issues, research results, resources for patients, facts and statistics, and related conferences and symposia.

Neuronet: www.neuronet.org

This is another Canadian site, which provides information about a number of neurologic disorders, including acute stroke. Neuronet also has a list of congresses and Canadian neurologists, a discussion forum, patient support information, and access to the Cochrane Database of systematic reviews.

Canadian Neuroscience Network: www.cns.ucalgary.ca

This site is organized through the Department of Clinical Neurosciences at the University of Calgary. The Canadian Neuroscience Network (formerly the Network on Neural Regeneration and Functional Recovery) links 18 universities and research institutes and approximately 125 researchers across Canada. There are also links to other neuroscience web sites.

American Academy of Neurology: www.aan.com

The American Academy of Neurology represents neurologists from around the world. This site provides information on neurologic conditions, including stroke, to both medical professionals and the public. It also includes a long list of web sites and academic neurology departments in the United States.

Neurosurgery//On-Call: www.aans.org

This is the site of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and Congress of Neurological Surgeons. It provides neurosurgical information for health care professionals and the public (with a list of frequently asked questions about stroke at www.aans.org/pubpages/patres/strokebroch.html).

**American Heart Association:
www.amhrt.org**

This site provides access to scientific statements, partial text from the journal *Stroke*, statistics and information for patients.

**American Medical Association:
www.ama-assn.org**

This site provides the complete text of the journal *Archives of Neurology*.

**National Stroke Association:
www.stroke.com**

The National Stroke Association links up to Net Health, which has information on a long list of medical topics, including stroke. There is a brief statement about a stroke research project plus links to related sites.

**Neurosciences on the Internet:
www.neuroguide.com**

This site provides an index of neuroscience resources on the Internet. However, as the index is not complete, it suggests the use of MEDLINE for full searches.

***The Journal of Neuroscience:*
www.jneurosci.org**

This site provides instructions for authors, subscription information, a "browse and search" through tables of contents of upcoming issues, and current and previously published articles in the journal.

**Stanford Stroke Center:
www.med.stanford.edu/school/stroke**

This site provides information about the Center along with a list of their medical staff. It also features overviews of current clinical stroke trials being carried out at Stanford and patient information on stroke awareness.

**Columbia University:
www.columbia.edu/~dwd2/**

This site describes the association between cerebrovascular disease and dementia as is being examined through the Stroke and Aging Research Project at Columbia University. A list of the project's major publications is provided, along with links to related sites.

**National Library of Medicine:
www.nlm.nih.gov**

An online version of MEDLINE is now available free via the National Library of Medicine web site.

Reprint requests to: Kathleen Whelan, Manager, Professional Education, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, 1920 Yonge St., Toronto ON M4S 3E2